



[Mahmood Mamdani](#)

Citizen and Subject

Dar-es-Salaam-trained Ugandan intellectual Mahmood Mamdani's 1996 book "Citizen and Subject" brings more facts and insights about peasants and workers, to assist with understanding class alliance - the necessary condition for the National Democratic Revolution. The chapter **attached** is the book's summing-up. Note that Mamdani's sense of the word "subject" in this work is different and opposite from the usual philosophical and communist one. Here it means a subordinate person, as opposed to a free person.

Professor Mamdani [pictured above] has now returned to Uganda to head the [Makerere Institute of Social Research](#) (MISR). To read more about this significant move, [click here](#).

While the proletariat seeks allies, so does Imperialism. In this

work, Mamdani's principal insight is to recognise the class alliance typically sought by the Imperialists in neo-colonial Africa countries.

According to Mamdani, the Imperialists prefer to ally with the backward rural feudal elements commonly called "traditional leaders", "chiefs" or sometimes "Kings" in Africa; and against the modernising bourgeoisie and proletariat of the cities and towns.

To a South African this is not surprising, and indeed Mamdani regards South Africa as the classic case in this regard, although he quotes many other examples in the book.

Mamdani's analysis is important because it contradicts a common presumption, namely that the Imperialist monopoly-capitalists tend to work through "compradors", who are local aspirant bourgeoisie, or bourgeoisie-for-rent, and who do the Imperialists' work for them.

Such compradors do exist, and clearly they exist in South Africa. Yet Mamdani's scheme reflects the facts and history of Imperialism in Africa better, at least up to now. Imperialism is, in general, hostile to any national bourgeoisie. The typical neo-colonial war of recent decades, including both the Iraq war and the recent NATO war of recolonisation against Libya, is a war of Imperialism against a national bourgeoisie that wants national sovereignty and control over its country's national resources.

In the light of this analysis it becomes easier to see why it is that the South African proletariat has long been, via the ANC, in alliance with parts of its national bourgeoisie, for national liberation, and against the monopoly-capitalist oppressors with their Imperial-globalist links.

For their part, the Imperialists relied heavily in the past on Bantustan leaders and on the Inkatha Freedom Party, but the ANC was able to form better links with the rural as well as the urban masses, thus achieving a class alliance that could, and still does, dominate the country in terms of mass support, including electoral support.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Citizen and Subject, C8, Linking the Urban and the Rural, Mamdani.](#)
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